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ABSTRACT

The symbolic presence of Ronald Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) has been and continues to be the pivot point in all summitry rhetoric between the American President and Soviet General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev. To examine some of the rhetorical choices made by Gorbachev to dramatize his vision of why Ronald Reagan refuses to negotiate on the issue of SDI, Kenneth Burke's "Dramatistic Pentad" is applied. One aspect of Mikhail Gorbachev's rhetorical world is revealed through three October 1986 speeches he presented in Moscow after his meeting with Ronald Reagan in Reykjavik, Iceland. Gorbachev's manipulation of the pentadic terms suggests a starkly different motive behind SDI from that presented by Ronald Reagan: it will allow nuclear superiority by the United States over the Soviet Union rather than peaceful co-existence. Pentadic elements are ordered so that identification with the drama's premises result in any call for peace automatically also becoming a demand for cessation of any SDI research or planning. However, since the Intermediate Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty is "strategically safe" and would enhance Gorbachev's ethos, and mostly, because the benefits and deficits as well as strengths and weaknesses of the SDI may well remain rhetorical, Gorbachev may not always link Soviet negotiations to demands for an abandonment of SDI, despite the rhetorical vision he invites his audience to share. (Eighty-one notes are included.) (MS)

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SOVIET SDI RHETORIC:

THE "EVIL EMPIRE" VISION OF MIKHAIL GORBACHEV

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ABSTRACT

This essay employs Kenneth Burke's "Dramatistic Pentad" to examine some of the rhetorical choices of General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev which dramatize Soviet perceptions of the Strategic Defense Initiative. Participants sharing in this vision would be inspired to pressure "evil" American advocates of SDI to withdraw their support since peace is impossible as long as "Star Wars" exists. The essay concludes with the suggestion that the power of SDI for both Soviets and Americans is and will probably remain its strength as a rhetorical strategy.

"Peace is unpatriotic when the Russians are coming."[1]

The symbolic presence of Ronald Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative has been and continues to be the pivot point in all summitry rhetoric between the American President and Soviet General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev. The two superpower leaders "had their largest and most forceful discussion" at Geneva in October 1985 on SDI, "the subject which divides them most."[2] The October 1986 Reykjavik Summit collapsed over the issue of SDI when Gorbachev insisted it would give the United States military-technical superiority and a first-strike capability while Reagan insisted it would be a purely defensive shield against nuclear forces and was "the moral alternative to traditional deterrence based on mutual assured destruction." Neither could they agree on what the 1972 ABM Treaty actually permitted in the way of research, development and testing of high-technology space-based defensive systems.[3] And the "on-again, off-again" proposed late 1987 Washington Summit hinged on the Strategic Defense Initiative which Reagan saw as "a key to ridding the world of nuclear weapons" and Gorbachev maintained "could lead to an arms race in space."[4]

Prior to the 1980s, the control of nuclear weapons had traditionally been based on the concept of deterrence, that the "enemy" will not use a nuclear weapon because in so doing they will incur nuclear disaster as well.[5] This doctrine of mutually assured destruction facilitated a nuclear arms race in which both the United States and the Soviet Union simultaneously pursued defense and offense:

> First they threatened each other with bombers and defended themselves with anti-aircraft installations. But air defenses only stimulated the development of an offensive countermeasure, the intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM), which is able to fly-high above jet fighters and surface-to-air missiles. Later came another countermeasure, the

cruise missile, which can fly below and avoid tracking by enemy anti-aircraft radar. In the 1960s both sides developed anti-ballistic missiles (ABMs), but they soon learned that those could be overwhelmed with multiple independently targetable re-entry vehicles or MIRVs.[6]

Eventually both countries agreed it was futile to try and shield themselves against nuclear missiles and that a leak-proof defense was impossible. The most sensible counter-defense was additional offense. The logic of mutual vulnerability was formalized through the 1972 ABM (Anti-Ballistic Missile) Treaty which elevated mutual vulnerability from technical fact to the status of international law.[7] Inherent in the treaty was the recognition that deterrence depended on mutual vulnerability. As well as limiting the development, testing and deployment of defense systems based on technologies then available, the treaty also placed restrictions on the development and testing of those in the future, including space-based missile defenses and was to be of "unlimited duration."[8]

By the early 1980s, although it was still generally believed that neither the Soviets or the Americans had effective defenses against ballistic missiles, some insisted much had happened in defense technology since the ABM Treaty was signed" and that "the latest advances enable us to destroy missiles and warheads with great effectiveness by nonnuclear means."[9]

Still most Soviet and American nuclear arms negotiations were based on the idea that offensive weapons would remain the instruments of deterrence and that the ABM Treaty would remain in force. However, in a March 23, 1983 televised speech Ronald Reagan proposed "nothing short of a revolution in the nuclear order" when he called for defenses which "would repudiate the basic premise of the nuclear age, on which all the nuclear-weapons policies of both superpowers had been based: the unchallenged superiority of offense."[10] Vulnerability would

be replaced with invulnerability. The President envisioned a space-based ballistic missile defense as a shield against nuclear weapons. To support his ideas, Reagan created a program of land-and spaced-based long-term research based on advanced anti-ballistic missile technologies he called the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI). The goal of SDI or "Star Wars" was to develop options for ballistic missile defense (BMD) systems from which an American President may choose in the early 1990s.[11]

Theoretically SDI would not only result in a reduction of nuclear weapons but would render them useless offensively because of an impenetrable space shield over the West.[12] Thus when the Soviets realize they no longer need nuclear weapons, the United States will allegedly also no longer need such weapons and nuclear arms will become extinct. That is, unless the United States and President Reagan have another purpose in mind for the Strategic Defense Initiative.

This paper examines some of the rhetorical choices made by Mikhail Gorbachev to dramatize his vision of why Ronald Reagan refuses to negotiate on the issue of SDI. Kenneth Burke's "Dramatistic Pentad" is the critical framework for this study.[13] The critic who draws on Burke in interpreting a rhetorical act discovers language strategies that lead to identification. Burke maintains that, as in a play, human behavior can often be explained through dramatistic concepts. Just as there are a number of fundamental situations a dramatist utilizes to create a play, so there are a set number of basic scenes in which humans find themselves. Dramatism is not a metaphor for analyzing reality; it provides a literal statement about the nature of reality and humans as symbol-using animals. Situations that humans find themselves in are described through specific dramatic terms. As they describe these situations, people order five elements to reflect their views: act (what was done), scene (where or when it was done), agent (who

did the act), agency (the cause of the act or how it was done), and purpose (why the act happened). Used as a method, these terms enable a critic to discover how people view and respond to the world.

GORBACHEV: HIS RHETORICAL TRADITION

Before beginning this analysis, the rhetorical background of this "Soviet leader of unusual creativity" should be highlighted.[14] Born in 1931 to peasant parents in the Caucasus during famine caused by Stalin's enforcement of his central planning system, Mikhail Gorbachev was only ten at the time of the German invasion. He was the first Politburo member whose age precluded him from playing a role as a World War II frontline soldier. Gorbachev has always seen the "Great Patriotic War" in less heroic and more realistic terms than his Politburo predecessors, a view which has significantly influenced his political life and outlook:

> It was this absence of any historical baggage that helped smooth Gorbachev's road to power even while the Old Guard was still in control. Matters previously taboo increasingly became subjects for public discussion. It was the economy that progressively became the dominant factor even in foreign policy. For the old guardians of communist dogma...it would have been tantamount to treason to admit even indirectly, that the collectivization of agriculture had been a disaster. To the younger Soviet elite the land is no longer an issue of ideology but of practicality, of balancing economic efficiency with centralized political power.[15]

After graduating from the Law Faculty of Moscow State University in 1955, Gorbachev chose to use his professional skills for Party work rather than the procuracy. His political career began when he accepted the position as head of a

department of the Stavropol City Young Communist League.[16] By 1962, Gorbachev had become Party organizer of the Stavropol Region agricultural unit in the Caucasus and head of Party cadres, capable of influencing promotions and demotions. Because Central Committee officials often came to Stavropol for its mineral water spas Gorbachev played host to many high Party members. This "must have presented Gorbachev with a uniquely good opportunity to establish contacts with people in the central Party apparatus" including Yuri Andropov.[17]

After completing a degree in agronomy and economy in 1970, Gorbachev was elected first secretary of the Stavropol subdivision of the Communist Party and "had now joined the Party's super-elite," becoming a full member in 1971.[18] In 1978 Gorbachev inherited the position as agriculture secretary of the Central Committee and moved to Moscow. After promotion from candidate to full member of the Politburo he publicly aligned himself with his sponsor and mentor Yuri Andropov in 1982. Despite harvest failures, Gorbachev's star continued to rise with Andropov's election as General Secretary in 1982. Although Andropov wanted to move younger and more competent people into the Politburo, he had little time to accomplish his goals because from March 1983 on he was chronically ill. It became essential that Andropov have a reliable deputy. Although his official Party rank did not change, Mikhail Gorbachev became Yuri Andropov's closest ally. As Andropov's health declined, Gorbachev managed international situations and assumed still more authority when he took over for Andropov in heading the crisis management group that dealt with the Korean Boeing 747 passenger airliner shot down by the Soviets in 1983.

When Andropov died in February of 1984, it was generally understood that he had been grooming Gorbachev to replace him. However "Gorbachev's lack of substantial successes and his relatively short and narrow experience made it difficult to present him to the Party, nation and world as an obvious leader" and

on February 13, 1984, Konstantin Chernenko became General Secretary. Still, as Andropov's funeral procession demonstrated, two factors were clear: the new General Secretary was an ill old man and Gorbachev was second in the Party.[19] With Chernenko's death and Mikhail Gorbachev's ascension in March 1985, the last of the Soviet "old guard" leadership vanished. Within twenty-eight months, Party and state heads Leonid Brezhnev, Yuri Andropov, and Konstantin Chernenko, along with one of the most influential Poitaburo Members after the General Secretary, Dmitri Ustinov, had "all been laid to rest under the Kremlin Wall."[20] The sharp contrast between the old and sick men who were in charge of the Soviet Union from 1974 to 1984 and the young, dynamic Gorbachev stirred interest in the personality of the new Soviet leader and "also aroused hopes for radical reform and change."[21]

There is some skepticism as to whether any substantial changes in American-Soviet relations will or could occur with Gorbachev's emergence as the top Soviet leader. Not only are there "pressures for continuity in Soviet policy" but Soviet actions depend on ideology and tradition as much as they do on a new leader.[22] There is little doubt, however, that Gorbachev has more winning personal qualities for leadership than any of his predecessors. Gorbachev is a "gifted" public speaker whose "fluency and forcefulness" came as something of a surprise, particularly to Western observers. Law institutes are virtually the only educational settings which give Soviet students formal training in oratory, teaching them how to make speeches, present case and ask critical questions. At least in part because he had been trained as an attorney, "almost as unusual a background for a Soviet leader as Hollywood films are for an American president," Mikhail Gorbachev emerged as "the best speaker" and "the most eloquent member of the upper echelons of the Party since Leon Trotsky."[23]

In a sense it seemed he had become leader because other Politburo members

wanted "somebody who could be seen as a match for the American President, and who could stay in the ring with him." Gorbachev appears to fit the bill: like Reagan, he is "comfortable with the trappings and ceremonies of power" and is able to "work a crowd," something quite unlike his predecessors."[24] That Mikhail Gorbachev is a formidable opponent on the podium has not escaped his American counterparts. Former U.S. House Speaker Tip O'Neill describes Gorbachev as "a master of words" and President Reagan recalls "I found Mr. Gorbachev to be an energetic defender of Soviet policy" and "an eloquent speaker and a good listener."[25] This rhetorical skill was displayed in a speech in May 1985 during which Gorbachev "donned the mantel of Lenin":

> The place he chose was laden with significance...where in 1917 Lenin had proclaimed the victory of Bolshevism. Now Gorbachev stood on the same spot, leaning on the delicate white balustrade and gesturing lightly with his right hand. Above him loomed a massive portrait of Lenin. Dressed in a well-cut dark blue suit, Gorbachev pressed for a new beginning. The words were spoken quietly but the toughness of the content became clear later...for the great majority in the hall this speech—or rather the style of its delivery—proclaimed something of far greater importance. It contained none of the usual pseudo-revolutionary bombast, no melodramatic paeans to a glorious future, no promises of a new wealth, no dry statistics. This was no grey bureaucrat clinging rigidly to the lectern, reciting the empty rhetoric of his speech writers. Here was a spellbinding orator, varying pace and tone like an actor. At one moment he played the executive...then he used charm, chatting informally with his hand in his pocket; then once again he became the stern, lecturing expert, stabbing a finger at the auditorium. One moment he rolled his fists, arms bent, to describe

> the better work rhythms he desired, and the next, in muted and intimate tones, his words punctuated with pauses and smiles, he wooed his listeners. This performance contained all the elements of his "new style"—the dramatic delivery, the subtle questioning of old ideas with carefully modified emphases, and the symbolic use of setting, stance and style of speech. For many who were there, it was as though the old Smolny Institute was experiencing its second historic performance in this century—first Lenin, then Gorbachev.[26]

There are multiple characteristic which contribute to Gorbachev's image as an accomplished rhetor. In terms of ethos, he is seen as a courageous experimenter who is quick to detect opposition and recognize it both in terms of power and limits.[27] He is "intellectually able without being arrogant," loyal, honest and possesses "a natural air of authority."[28] Skilled as an extemporaneous speaker, Gorbachev is less pompous than the "Old Guard" and, while restrained, still "extroverted and often speaks with an intimate style."[29] He usually appears calm, self-assured and competent and is not above "taking a leaf or two from Reagan's book" using "dramatic pauses" and lowering his voice "to emphasize the significance of important phrases."[30] In the words of one perplexed British diplomat:

> He is a man of exceptional charm with a relaxed, self-depreciating sense of humor. Emotions flicker over a face of unusual sensitivity like summer breezes or a pond. In a discussion he was frank and flexible with a composure full of inner strength. He was fierce but courteous in argument.... How could someone so nice and human run the Soviet system?"[31]

Gorbachev is aware of the power inherent in a strong, positive rhetorical image. He creates an image of a man with "confidence in his own public skills"

who searches out opportunities to put these skills on worldwide display as evidence that "a younger, more vigorous, more sophisticated leader has taken command in Moscow."[32] Gorbachev has consciously opted for a more "Westernized" ethos in terms of behavior, appearance and manner. An example of this is the active role Raisa Gorbachev plays in creating her husband's public image. Not only is her appearance as a "stylish sophisticate" a stark contrast with images of earlier Kremlin "first ladies" but the very fact of her public appearance, with or without her husband, is a distinct break with Soviet tradition. The wives of Josef Stalin, Nikita Khruschev and Leonid Brezhnev were seldom seen in public and in Yuri Andropov's case, "it was not even known in the West whether or not he had a wife until she appeared at his funeral."[33]

As a communicator, one of Gorbachev's major challenges is to make the relationship between himself and the Soviet people two-way. His populist leadership style appears to facilitate audience identification. Early in his Politburo career, Gorbachev began doing what aging Party leaders had not: establishing links with the masses and introducing nuances into his rhetoric to appeal to their common interests. He acknowledged public opinion and often quoted "letters from ordinary people" in his speeches and practiced "walkabouts in Moscow" where he asked citizens what they wanted from Party and government.[34] For the vast majority of Soviets, Gorbachev's capacity to communicate, his charm and readiness to talk, especially after the "decrepitude of his predecessors" was far more important than any details of his rhetoric.[35]

Television has provided a link between Gorbachev and the Soviet people at least as successfully as it has for many Western politicians:

> Television had been the enemy of Brezhnev, Andropov, Tikhonov and Chernenko, since they were too old and too ill to project and image of strength and ability. For Gorbachev, television was an ally,

enhancing his popularity.[36]

If the Soviet public reacted positively to Mikhail Gorbachev as a podium speaker, they were "captivated" by their General Secretary on television, a fascination dependent not on the substance of his statements but rather on his charismatic television image.[37] Gorbachev's December 1985 appointment of a new Chairman of the State Committee for Television and Radio with charges to "mobilize the media," to make his image "more effective," reflects the General Secretary's respect for the role of television in establishing ethos.[38]

Gorbachev is also aware of his image in Western eyes and Western public perceptions of Soviet leadership. He possesses a "keen sense of timing for appealing to public sentiment" and challenges Ronald Reagan with his own weapon of showmanship.[39] He woos the media and courts publicity in the style of a Western politician, promotes his image as a family man and allows the media to "catch glimpses of his private life." Mikhail Gorbachev supplies the material needed to "welcome him onto the world stage" and thus presents himself to the Western world as one who clearly does not resemble a person "waiting for the opportunity to drop a nuclear bomb on the West."[40]

MIKHAIL GORBACHEV'S RHETORICAL WORLD

What follows is an examination of one aspect of Mikhail Gorbachev's rhetorical world revealed through three October 1986 speeches he presented in Moscow after meeting with Ronald Reagan in Reykjavik, Iceland. One speech was a press-conference for journalists who had covered the Soviet-American summit[41] and two were televised adresses to the Soviet people.[42]

The "Star Wars" Drama: They Win/We All Lose

Gorbachev's rhetoric reveals his definition of SDI and the vision he wishes

his audience to accept. This drama creates a world in which peaceful co-existence is impossible as long as the United States continues to call for a Strategic Defense Initiative. His manipulation of the pentadic terms suggests a starkly different motive behind SDI rather than the reason Ronald Reagan presents: it will allow nuclear superiority over the Soviets rather than peaceful co-existence with them. The elements are ordered so that one option remains for an audience sharing the vision: the demand for immediate cessation of the Strategic Defense Initiative. The following elements are identified in this pentad:

The scene: Reykjavik, Iceland

The act: supporting the Strategic Defense Initiative

The agent: Ronald Reagan

The agency: arms control negotiations

The purpose: to escalate the nuclear arms competition

An agent-purpose ratio dominates this drama. The true reason behind the American President's call for SDI becomes clear once the situation is understood. Negative attributes of Reagan and his co-agents, the American government/military, result in actions presented as negotiations which are really acts designed to encourage arms proliferation.

Gorbachev indicates that he reminded President Reagan since the Soviets and Americans are entering a new area in which substantial reduction of nuclear weapons and their eventual elimination will begin, a strict observation of the 1972 ABM Treaty must be followed in order to "rule out everything that could undermine equality in the process of disarmament and to rule out any possibility that weapons of a new type ensuring military superiority could be created."43 Therefore, any further research, including that relating to SDI must be terminated if it goes beyond laboratories. The President refused the condition

and suggested that the Soviets "should join SDI" and help create a new treaty, an act destroying the mechanism "which safeguards strategic stability."[44] During the Reykjavik negotiations it became clear that the American adherence to SDI meant they would not agree to limit research, development and testing of the program to a laboratory framework and that they "must have the right to study and test everything related to SDI, not only in laboratories but also outside them, including in space."[45]

The United States is not merely seeking to "depreciate the treaty and deprive it of its meaning" and "revise it so as to develop a large-scale space-based ABM system for its own selfish purposes" but to "organize a funeral for the ABM pact and with the participation of the Soviet Union and Gorbachev."[46] Participants sharing in the substance of Gorbachev's drama realize that SDI is nothing less than an attempt on the part of the American government to stop arms negotiations and actually encourage the development of more nuclear weapons.

By espousing SDI, Reagan is able to whitewash the destructive position of the US administration which, when it is seen clearly, poses a "political danger" because it "introduces uncertainty and stirs up distrust for each other and suspicion."[47] The ultimate goal of the United States is a new escalation of the arms race "with unpredictable consequences" both politically and militarily:

> What was carefully camouflaged before is now becoming clearer: In American and West European ruling circles, there are powerful forces that are seeking to wreck the process of nuclear disarmament, some people who are gain beginning to claim that nuclear weapons are all but a blessing.[48]

Not only does the American policy based on SDI stand in the way of ending the arms race and ridding the world of nuclear weapons but "it is the chief obstacle in the path to a nuclear-weapon-free world."[49]

A recurring strategy employed by Gorbachev through featuring the agent-purpose ratio is the linking of Reagan's dogmatic adherence to SDI with the goal of American military superiority. The United States' support for the program is evidence that "those who make policy in the West are thinking about nuclear weapons not at all in terms of defense" and "think that they will gain military superiority over us through space and will realize the idea of a former President who said: whoever dominates space will dominate the earth."[50]

A final motive for the West's persistent support of SDI is that it will economically strain the Soviet Union, forcing concessions on their part:

> In the West's calculations, there is a thesis to the effect that the Soviet Union will ultimately be unable to bear the arms race economically, that it will break and go hat in hand to the West. All one has to do is put more pressure on it and build up one's position of strength . . . this could be heard in the US President's statement after our meeting."[51]

Despite the fact that "such plans are not only built on sand but are dangerous" the purpose for and possible result of the Strategic Defense Initiative is as malevolent as ever:

> After Reykjavik, the notorious SDI has become even more conspicuous as a symbol of obstruction to the cause of peace, as a concentrated expression of militaristic designs and of unwillingness to lift the nuclear threat impending over mankind. It is impossible to see it any other way.[52]

Gorbachev locates motive for this drama in the agent to whom he attaches negative attributes. Because of flaws in the character of Ronald Reagan and specious motives of his co-agents in the federal government, SDI can only serve to work against arms control policies and treaties. These flaws in the character

of the agents are unfortunate because a "new impulse" is needed to turn the worsening world nuclear weapons situation "in the necessary direction" and "such an impulse could be given only by the leaders of the USSR and the United States of America."[53] If participants in this drama identify with Mikhail Gorbachev's premises, American leaders, government and military are incapable of helping the world find the right direction. On the contrary, they are at best amoral agents leading the world further into nuclear madness for self-serving motives.

A recurring theme relating to the persona of the agent in Gorbachev's drama is trickery. It does not bother Ronald Reagan to use such tactics in order to get what he wants:

> We again heard from President Reagan the reasoning that has been well known since Geneva and from his public statements: that SDI is a defensive system; that if we are going to eliminate nuclear weapons, how can we protect ourselves from some madman who might get hold of them; and that he is ready to share with us the results of work on SDI . . . you don't want to share even . . . dairy equipment with us, yet you expect us to believe your promise to share development work on SDI with us. Yesterday the President, trying to justify his position on SDI, said that he needs this program so that America and its allies will remain invulnerable to a Soviet missile strike. As you see, there was no more mention of madmen. The "Soviet threat" was dragged out again. But this is pure trickery. After all, we proposed that not only strategic nuclear arms but all the nuclear arms in the possession of the US and USSR be eliminated under strict verification. Why is there any question of a need to secure 'America's freedom' and that of its friends against Soviet nuclear missiles? After all, these missiles will no longer exist. If there are no nuclear weapons, then why is a

> defense against them needed? This means that the entire 'Star Wars' undertaking is purely militaristic in nature and is aimed at achieving a military advantage over the Soviet Union.[54]

Reagan's co-agents, the military and others who would profit from the arms race, are "clearly frightened" and "are trying with all their might" to "gain control over the sentiments of broad circles of the world public, to extinguish their yearning for peace, and to prevent governments from taking a clear-cut position at this decisive historical moment." The "zigzags and discordant statements" of such agents "might be an action, thought out ahead of time, to trick ordinary people."[55] The strategy of deception regarding the promotion of SDI is not limited to the President and the military: "when Mr. Shultz, the US Secretary of State, tells the American people that SDI is a kind of 'insurance policy' for America, this is, at the very least an attempt to mislead the American people"; in fact "the whole picture of the talks in Reykjavik has been distorted."[56]

Gorbachev also envisions the characters in this drama to be hypocrites and liars:

> In Reykjavik, pointing out the difference between our systems, the President told me: 'We recognize freedom of the press . . . 'But how does this look in actual fact? I have been told that our public organization APN (Novosti Press Agency) published in English the texts of my press conference in Reykjavik and my address on Soviet television and sent them to a great many countries, including the United States. Here's what happened: the pamphlets carrying these texts have been detained by American customs for several days now. They are being kept from American readers. That's your 'right to listen to any point of view'![57]

And other matters "have reached the point of outright juggling of the facts" when the American people "have been told the half-truth."[58]

Gorbachev credits the ignoble purposes of SDI to a President who is both ignorant of the real situation and unduly influenced by the military as well. When he attempted to "link ideological differences with questions of ending the arms race" Reagan demonstrated "to put it mildly, a total lack of information and lack of understanding of what the socialist world is and what is taking place in it."[59] The key to the American administrations' improper understanding of Soviet initiatives lies in the American approach to SDI and "what it has in mind is what the American military-industrial complex has in mind. The former is in the latter's power, and the President is not free to make such a decision."[60] An additional theme dramatized by Gorbachev in featuring the agent is the identification of the agents' illogical nature and tendency to create fallacious arguments. When faced with questions they do not want to answer, American negotiators "look for problems and create artificial obstacles" which are not reasonable:

> On he one hand, we reach agreement on beginning the reduction of nuclear weapons, which today are the most dangerous and terrible weapons. But on the other hand, we are supposed to give our blessing to research, and even conduct it in space, in order to create the latest weapons. This is at variance with normal logic.[61]

A final attribute assigned to the agents in this vision is a lack of creativity and initiative. The reactions of Reagan to major new Soviet proposals was "stuff that everyone is pretty tired of" with "not one new thought, not one fresh approach, and not one idea that might contain even a hint of some solution, of some progress." That the American President was not really interested in achieving some major arms agreement was obvious because he "was not

prepared to resolve fundamental questions on a large scale, or to meet us halfway in order really to give an impulse to productive and encouraging talks." In the final analysis, American arms negotiators did not have "enough of the courage, responsibility and political resolve so necessary in solving major, urgent world problems. They held to their old positions, which time has already eroded and which do not meet present-day realities."[62]

Ultimately, Gorbachev's definition of the situation creates an American government and possibly an American President so motivated by hate for the Soviet Union that it deliberately seeks out ways to offset peace initiatives and facilitate Soviet-American hostility:

> What kind of government is that? It turns out that not only does it have no constructive proposals on the key questions of disarmament, it does not even have any desire to maintain the atmosphere necessary for a normal continuation of the dialogue. Every time a ray of hope is detected in approaches to the major questions of Soviet-American relations, to the settlement of questions affecting the interests of all mankind, right away a provocation follows, something designed to wreck the possibility of a positive resolution and to poison the atmosphere. So, where is the true face of the American administration? A very unattractive portrait of the administration of a great country, one quick to take destructive actions, is taking shape. Either the President cannot cope with an entourage that literally breathes hatred for the Soviet Union and for everything that can lead international affairs into a calm channel, or he himself wants this.[63]

Gorbachev introduces a counter-agent into his drama in the form of the American people. There is still hope for summitry and cessation of the nuclear arms build-up if the American government and President are set straight. "There

are few people in America" who believe SDI can even be created and once the American people know the "true content of Soviet foreign policy" and "our real intentions" they may influence the President and persuade him to negotiate for peace rather than superiority.[64] Gorbachev envisions the entire world possibly functioning as agents to counter the self-serving American administration:

> I think that a great many people throughout the world, including leaders invested with power, can and must draw some serious conclusions from Reykjavik. Everyone will have to think over gain and again what the trouble is and why such persistent efforts to create a breakthrough and advance to a nuclear-weapons-free world and universal security have so far failed to produce the needed result.[65]

If participants in this drama share Gorbachev's premises, they will agree that "the trouble" is Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative and the "breakthrough" will come only from pressure on the United States to back away from that program and all that it entails.

Gorbachev's "Evil Empire" Vision

Participants sharing in the substance of the rhetorical world created in this drama are lead to two conclusions:

1. The Strategic Defense Initiative is an act perpetrated by a selfish and somewhat paranoid American government to block Soviet peace efforts and establish military superiority for the United States.
2. The United States must abolish its planned Strategic Defense Initiative if nuclear weapons are to be abolished.

Acceptance of the first conclusion suggests that since SDI is to be used by corrupt or immoral agents, it can only function in a corrupt or immoral manner. Gorbachev's focus on the agent-purpose ratio reveals his definition of the

situation to be such that casuistry is located in the persona of the agent: the purpose of most suggestions made by the United States during summitry with the Soviets is determined by traits integral to the negotiator's personality. In this case, trickery and deceit, hypocrisy, lack of creativity, ignorance, fallacious thinking and a basic desire to not live peacefully with the Soviets result in Americans doing virtually all they can to prevent any successful arms talks. SDI is supported so strongly by the United States primarily because it is so offensive to the Soviets. Identification with Mikhail Gorbachev in this "Star Wars" drama would inspire an audience seeking peace and arms de-escalation to pressure the "evil" advocates of the Strategic Defense Initiative in the Reagan administration to withdraw their support from the program. Any significant movement in negotiating nuclear weapons limitations and their eventual extinction is impossible as long as the SDI barrier remains. Peace is impossible as long as SDI exists since the program represents an escalation of nuclear weapons technology and competition. Gorbachev's vision, if substantiated, leads his audience to conclude that as long as SDI exists "even in theory" the United States and not the Soviet Union is the real "evil empire."

DISCUSSION

How accurate is Mikhail Gorbachev's vision of the Strategic Defense Initiative? Is SDI being used by the United States to block arms control or is it possible that the program, if allowed to mature through space-based research and testing, might eventually make nuclear weapons obsolete? Reagan's Reykjavik conduct indicated he still believed SDI would serve as an impregnable dome over the United States and render nuclear weapons impotent. And there are those in the Reagan Administration who are "deadly serious" about SDI and who believe "the stakes are nothing less than the survival of the United States."[66] In their

view, the Soviets are capable and perhaps even desirous of launching a preemptive first strike against the United States. Merely having to negotiate nuclear treaties with the Soviet Union is destabilizing because, while we consider nuclear war "unfeasible and suicidal for both, our chief adversary views it as feasible and winnable for himself."[67] Soviet military doctrine stresses warfighting and survival in a nuclear environment, the importance of numerical superiority, the contribution of active defense and the advantages of preemption.[68] America and the West may need SDI for insurance against the Soviets who have a "record of playing fast and loose with past agreements" as well as one of "noncompliance on almost every major arms agreement we have with them."[69] According to one observer of Soviet-American summitry, diplomacy is useless:

> I realized many years ago that the avenues of containment through statesmanship and diplomacy were about as impressive to the Communist rulers as watering the Sahara Desert with a garden hose. Treaties, pacts and conventions mean no more to them than they did to Hitler and his Nazis. They are used only as instruments to wither and destroy our democratic institutions. They are totally irreconcilable in their determination to impose their cruel godless cult over every living soul and will lie, cheat and use every dirty trick known to achieve this end. Ever since the Big Three conference at Yalta in February of 1945, the Soviet leadership has been laughing up its sleeves at our naive attempts to compromise, rationalize and cooperate in the makings of a new world free of the terrors of war.[70]

Gorbachev and the Soviets may also have a hidden motive for arguing against SDI: their own strategic defense program. They know that SDI will thwart the nuclear superiority of a country that does not have it "because their own people

are deep into 'Star Wars'" and are at "their wits' end in a campaign to undercut popular support in the West for SDI" so they may continue to develop their own long-running space-based strategic defense program.[71]

Ultimately, however, it seems that the situation dramatized by Mikhail Gorbachev in his "Star Wars Drama" accurately reflects some Soviet-American scenarios. When a chief advisor to President Reagan argues that because "Soviet high command denies nuclear weapons requires fundamental revisions of accepted military doctrine, so should the U.S." and when a U.S. Secretary of State warns "we must be careful not to permit our revulsion against war to lower our guard" when dealing with the Soviets there is at least some indication that the United States may not have the best interests of the Soviet Union in mind during negotiations.[72]

The Soviet fear of SDI may also be understandable. If the United States is successful in developing a shield which would protect its territory from ballistic missiles it would have a first strike capability. And even if the shield did not guarantee foolproof protection, it would substantially alter the strategic balance.[73] Even in a "least-worst case scenario" SDI would be destabilizing because if the United States deployed a space shield, the Soviets would have to respond. They would have to be able to defeat whatever defenses the United States put into space and might even attempt to match them. Despite claims to the contrary, there is also evidence to indicate that it would be enormously difficult for the Soviet Union to develop a similar system because of a "technology gap."[74]

Finally Mikhail Gorbachev's vision of SDI as a threat to peace seems to be less anti-American propaganda and more legitimate concern when "even" officials in the Reagan administration agree that it "would obviously violate the ABM treaty."[75] In fact, there are many in the Administration who counter Reagan's

view and suggest SDI is designed mostly as a defensive creation to protect military strategic sites such as ICBM silos and not protect cities and the American people with a vast shield.[76] Therefore, just as the "Star Wars" vision would have its participants believe, it appears that SDI would assure the survivability rather than the extinction of nuclear weapons.

CONCLUSION

The pentad in this study reveals Mikhail Gorbachev's version of the Strategic Defense Initiative rhetorical vision. Because motives for this drama are located in agent and purpose, audience participation results in condemnation of the United States government for creating SDI to block progress in nuclear weapons negotiations with the Soviets. Pentadic elements are ordered so that identification with the drama's premises result in any call for peace automatically also becoming a demand for cessation of any SDI research or planning.

This essay concludes speculatively, suggesting why Gorbachev may not always link Soviet negotiations to demands for an abandonment of SDI despite the rhetorical vision he invites his audience to share. For example, the Soviet General Secretary agreed to a December 1987 Summit with President Reagan to discuss the "agreed to in principle" INF Treaty, despite Reagan's refusal to budge on SDI.[77] Gorbachev may have weighed the benefits of negotiating the treaty against maintaining his anti-SDI stance and decided that, in this case, the symbolic clout of achieving an historic nuclear weapons agreement outweighed the symbolic strength of rhetoric criticizing SDI. If an agreement were reached, his ethos would be enhanced both in the Soviet Union and in the West. Also, the INF Treaty is more-or-less "strategically safe" because neither superpower would be giving up much since it would be "more of a symbolic gesture than a real

reduction in worldwide arsenals of nuclear weapons" leaving thousands of nuclear warheads atop thousands of Soviet and American missiles.[78]

It may be that the strength of Ronald Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative for both the Soviet Union and the United States is mostly in its rhetorical throw-weight rather than in its potential to shield America from a preemptive Soviet nuclear attack. The rhetorical environment which flourishes around the American SDI vision inspires fear, a perverse awe and an increasingly lucrative, expanding military-industrial complex—all to keep the Soviets in their place. And the symbolic reality of the Soviet's vision creates an SDI system geared toward perpetuating a nuclear escalation nightmare which demands, upon "awakening," its immediate dismemberment. Perhaps not surprisingly, the Soviet call for dismantling SDI and initiating arms control also dramatizes steps that gradually allow the Soviet Union to become an economic superpower.[79] Finally, the benefits and deficits as well as strengths and weaknesses of the Strategic Defense Initiative may well remain rhetorical. It seems that "the unpalatable but inescapable truth is that the vulnerability of the United States to destruction by Soviet nuclear forces cannot be mitigated by any foreseeable defensive shield as long as nuclear weapons exist in their current numbers" and "a perfect defense which protects people and cities appears to be unfeasible."[80] In short, the belief is widespread, where SDI is concerned, that "the emperor has no clothes."[81]

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